

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated May 21, 2003. Claims 1-10, 38, and 39 are pending in this application. As mentioned above, the claims have not been amended in this response. Claims 1 and 38 are in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

First, Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that Claims 9 and 10 include allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in proper independent form. Claims 9 and 10 have not been so rewritten because, for the reasons given below, Claim 1 (their base claim) is believed to be allowable.

Applicants note that an Information Disclosure Statement and corresponding Form PTO-1449 was filed in the Office on August 9, 1999 and July 5, 2001, respectively. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner return an initialed copy of each Form PTO-1449, indicating that the references cited therein were considered.

Applicants also note that the "Office Action Summary" page states that Claims 11-37 have been withdrawn from consideration. Applicants note, however, that Claims 11-37 were canceled in the Amendment dated March 27, 2003, and thus, Applicants request that the Examiner acknowledge that these claims have been canceled.

Applicants enclose hereto a Letter Transmitting Corrected Drawings, which makes additional, minor changes to Figures 1 and 2, as explained therein. Applicants request that these corrected drawings be approved by the Examiner.

The Office Action rejected Claims 1 and 38 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,529,239 (Dyck et al.), and rejected Claims 2-8 and 39 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Dyck in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,323,901 (Ukita). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

In regard to the rejections based on Dyck et al., Applicants submit that Dyck et al. has an effective date of June 1, 1998, which is later than the date of January 30, 1998 for Japanese application 10-018813, from which this case claims priority. Applicants are in the process of preparing a sworn translation of Japanese application 10-018813, and will submit it to the Office shortly.

Applicants submit that since no other art was cited in the Office Action as disclosing the features of independent Claims 1 and 38, these claims are now believed to be allowable.

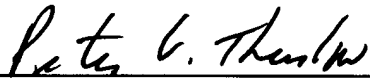
A review of the other art of record, including Ukita, has failed to reveal anything that, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as applied against Claims 1 and 38. Therefore, those claims are respectfully submitted to be patentable over the art of record.

The other rejected claims in this application depend from either Claim 1 or 38, and, therefore, are submitted to be patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, individual reconsideration of the patentability of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,


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